

بَلِّغُوا لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرَ جَمِيعًا

**What governs the**  
**RISE AND FALL**  
**OF NATIONS?**

**Maulana Sayyid Abul A'ala Maududi**

(Edited by: Muhammad Nabeel Musharraf)

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*From darkness to light!*

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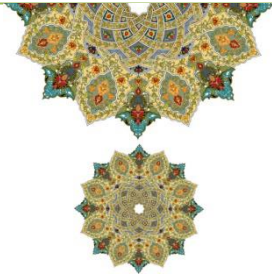
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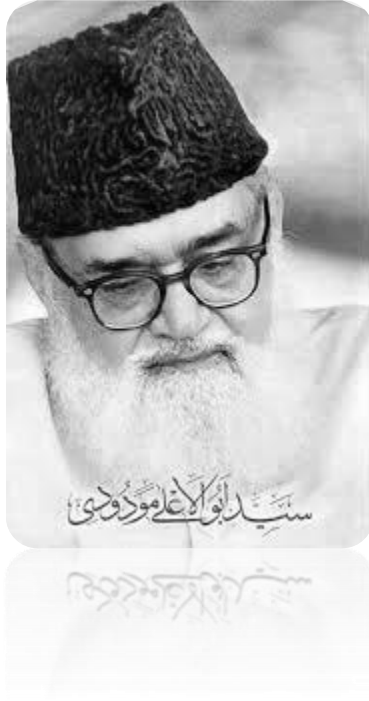
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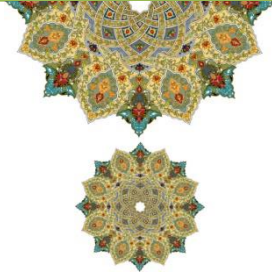
Syed Abul Aala Maududi (1903-1979)

An Islamic philosopher, jurist, journalist, activist, Scholar and imam whose numerous works have been translated from Urdu to English, Arabic, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Burmese, Pushto and many other languages.

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## FOREWORD

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This booklet is the English translation of a speech delivered by Maulana Syed Abul Aala Maududi at a public meeting in Dar-ul-Islam near Pathankot (East Punjab) on 10th of May 1947. The audience that was present when this speech was delivered consisted of several Hindus and Sikhs, besides Muslims. The speech should be studied while keeping in consideration the turbulent times when entire East Punjab had turned into a raging volcano about to explode shortly with all its fury. This was the time when the inevitable partition of British-controlled India was on the verge. Only three months after this address was delivered, the conflagration of violence and bloodshed the disastrous effects of which now form a tragic episode of history had swept over the entire land.

This speech was initially published in Urdu by Islamic Publications, Pakistan with the title *Banao aur Bigar* [Construction and Destruction]. The current edition has been

the re-rendering of the English edition produced by Ahsan Publication for the Bangladeshi readers in 2006. While preparing this version, we have revised some of the translation while referring back to the original Urdu edition and added notes and comments to enhance clarity and understanding, where applicable. In addition, we have also organized the content of this book in three separate chapters in order to facilitate the readers in easily remembering the key messages and the flow of argument. Considering the need for a clear way forward for the Muslim minorities in present times, the editor has translated from Urdu and included an appendix comprising of a summary of the four-point agenda that Maulana highlighted in a pre-partition Ijtema (gathering) of members of Jamat-e-Islami at Madras.

Editorial Team,  
Australian Islamic Library,  
Perth, 17 October 2017

## **Important Note**

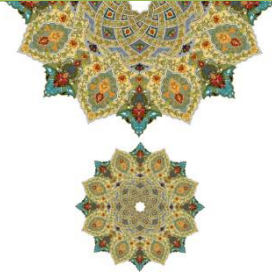
Various researchers and philosophers, Muslims as well as non-Muslims, have pondered upon the principles governing the rise and fall of nations. Accordingly, we can see a range of theories and explanations regarding this phenomenon. However, when it comes to defining what is the principle or the criterion for this in the sight of Allah SWT, we can only form an opinion based on our reflection but cannot say so with 100% certainty.

This book is also based on a detailed reflection and analysis of Maulana Syed Abul Aala Maududi which he has explained using a very interesting analogy of a garden and the gardeners. However, the editorial team wishes to point out that it cannot be said with complete surety that this is exactly what the rule of Allah swt regarding the rise and fall of nations is. We can say, based on our understanding of the Quran and Sunnah, that this appears to be the principle governing rise and fall. And Allah knows best.



# **THE LAW OF RISE AND FALL**

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## **PRAISES AND SALUTATIONS**

Praise and glory be to the Lord, who created us, blessed us with reason and the power of understanding, endowed us with the discretion to sift right from wrong, and sent the best of His devoted servants to instruct and guide us. Peace and blessings be on those pious servants of God who instilled humanity into the progeny of Adam a.s., taught them the principles of civilized living, made them aware of the real aim of human life and gave them such rules and regulations by following which they can achieve peace in this world and salvation in the Hereafter.

## **THE DIVINE LAW OF THE RISE AND FALL OF NATIONS**

Ladies and Gentlemen! Allah swt - who has created this world, spread out the earth, and populated it with human beings - is not the Being who acts rashly without design or purpose. He does not take a leap in the dark; He is not a whimsical Lord who reigns over the kingdom without any planning will. He has permanent laws, firm regulations and fixed rules by which He governs the universe.

As the sun, the moon, the earth, the air, water, trees, and animals are subject to His Law; as our birth and death, our childhood, youth and old age, our respiration, our digestion and circulation of blood and our sickness and health is controlled by the definite and indiscriminate laws of God; in an exactly similar manner, the ups and downs of our history, our rise and fall, our progress or decay, our personal prospects and destiny of our nation or country are controlled by the same unavoidable and indiscriminate law of God.

If it is not possible for a man to breathe through his eyes instead of his nose; if it is impossible for the heart to perform the functions of the stomach, then it is equally impossible that a nation, by adopting the path which warrants decline according to the Divine Law, can rise to glory. If the reaction of fire upon all people is indiscriminately the same; if it is not hot for one individual and cold for another, then evil deeds, which are evil deeds in the sight of Divine Law, also cannot cause the decline of one and the rise of another. The Divine rules which govern the good or ill-fortune of a man cannot be altered or evaded by human beings. The Divine rules are neither inimical to nor in favor of a particular person.

## **THE FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT CLAUSE OF THE DIVINE LAW**

The first and the most important clause of Divine Law is this:

“Construction pleases God; destruction displeases Him”.

As the Master, it is His desire that His world should be managed in the right order; that the world should be made a fairer place; that the resources, the powers and the capabilities endowed by Him should be utilized in the best possible way. He most certainly does not like—nor can He be expected to like—that His world should be destroyed, devastated or spoiled with the disorder, foul-play or tyranny, and oppression.

In the eyes of God, only those candidates for management of the affairs of the world are approved for selection who possess constructive abilities of an extraordinary degree and He entrusts to them the authority to manage the affairs of the world.

## **THOSE WHO BRING TREMENDOUS HAVOC ARE SWEEPED OUT**

God keeps a constant watch over what constructive and reformative measures they take and what havoc they bring about in the world. Until the time their deeds of construction outweigh their deeds of destruction and until there is anyone else available who is likely to perpetrate less destruction, God perpetuates the rules of these people despite all their

misdeeds and sins. But when the balance of their achievements is heavily inclined towards destruction and less towards construction, God removes them from authority and casts them away. In their place, some other are installed to manage the affairs of the world subject to the same inflexible condition.

## **THE OWNER OF A GARDEN AND THE GARDENER**

Such is the Law of Nature. Your reason will affirm that it should be so. If one of you owns a garden and he wants to give it under the charge of a gardener, what will be his first and foremost demand from the gardener? The owner of the garden will require nothing from the gardener save that he should improve its condition and should not devastate it. The owner would certainly want the gardener to keep the garden in the best possible condition, to develop it to the possible extent, to endeavor his best to increase its beauty and charm and to enhance its produce. The gardener who puts his heart and soul in his work and tends the garden with care and great skill; who arranges the passages; who tends the good trees and cleanses out all poisonous plants, brambles and dry brushes; who grows new species of fruit and flowers with his ingenuity and knowledge—such a gardener will immensely please his master. The master will promote him and never think of sacking such an able, dutiful and hard-working gardener.

On the other hand, if the master finds that the gardener is unskilled as well as work-shirker, and willfully, or even unintentionally, causes damage to his garden; and that the

garden is filled with dirt; the passages are crumbling; in some parts the water is overflowing the channels while in other parts the flower beds are parched, grass, weeds, and brambles are growing wildly; the flower plants and fruit trees are being callously cut down; fine trees are withering and thorny bushes are flourishing—think then, how can he regard this gardener with favour? What kind of recommendation, what type of supplication, what sort of an entreaty, the family consideration or other self-appointed rights can induce the master to continue the gardener in charge of his garden?

At best, the master may relent to give the gardener a second chance with the admonition that he should mend his ways. But if the gardener pays no heed to the admonition and continues the work of desolating the garden, what other alternative is there except that the master should remove him from the position under disgrace and employ a new gardener in his place?

Now consider that you show such deep concern for the good management of a small garden. Then how can God, who has handed over such a vast expanse of land containing so many resources under the charge of men, be indifferent to the question as to whether you are engaged in construction or destruction of the world? If you are engaged in construction, there is absolutely no reason why He should divest you of charge. But if you construct nothing and persist in your course of destroying and desolating his magnificent garden, God will acknowledge none of your claims to hold the charge of His garden, however strong the foundations of these

claims be in your own conceit. God will administer some warnings; He will grant you a few periods of grace to mend your ways; at last, He will inevitably eject you from the charge.

## **THE DIFFERENCE IN THE OUTLOOK OF THE MASTER AND THE SERVANT**

In this case, the approach and preferences of God would be different from that of men in the same manner as the approach and preferences of the proprietor of the garden would be as compared to the gardener.

Suppose two or four generations of a certain family have been tending a garden. A forebear of this family was employed in this garden on the basis of his knowledge and skill. His descendants also were skilled and applied their skill well. The master felt it needless to remove these good people and employ new hands. Since they were doing well, they had the pre-eminent right over others. In this way, this family was firmly rooted in the service of this garden.

But the present generation of this family is unworthy, inept, inefficient and irresponsible. It possesses no skill in gardening. It is spoiling the whole place. And yet it claims that it has been the keeper of this garden since the time of its forefathers. Its great grandfather has laid out this garden. Hence it has a hereditary claim over this garden. It is by no means fair to evict it and appoint a more able keeper to look after this garden. Can the master concur with the viewpoint

of his unworthy employees? Will not the master say that from his point of view, good upkeep of the garden is the foremost duty of a gardener?

He will say, 'I did not lay out this garden for the benefit of your forebear, rather I had employed him to look after it. Your rights over this garden are conditional upon your skill and good service. If you tend the garden with skill, your rights shall be granted. What grudge can I bear towards my old gardeners that I should have sacked them despite their good work and try new hands needlessly? But on the other hand, if you ruin and lay waste the garden for the upkeep of which you have been employed; I cannot keep you holding the guardianship of this garden. There are other candidates standing by. I shall hand over the charge to them and you will serve under their orders. If you do not mend your ways even at this stage and prove yourselves good-for-nothing even as subordinates and cause deterioration, you will be turned out and replaced by new servants.

## **THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DIVINE AND HUMAN OUTLOOK**

The same difference of viewpoint which we find between the garden owner and the gardeners exists between the Master and His creatures, the people of this world.

In whichever part of the land various nations of the world inhabit, they claim that the region is their motherland. They argue that they have lived there for several generations which is their justification for hereditary claims over that land. They

believe that the government of the country should, therefore, be in their hands. No alien has the right to govern them. But the real Master of the world – God – does not concur with this viewpoint. He does not recognize these nationalistic claims. God does not concede the hereditary claims of nations that whatever happens they shall not be dislodged from the control of their territories.

God watches only the performance of a nation in her own country. If that nation is engaged in reform and construction; if she expends her energies in the development and reconstruction of her country, if she is engrossed in uprooting the evils and cultivating virtues, then the Master of this universe says, “Yes, verily, you deserve to rule over this land. You have inhabited this country for long and you are a worthy people. Your right over this land is permanent”.

But if opposite is the case; if destruction has overtaken construction; if God’s earth is being filled with evil and virtue is banished from it; if God-given resources of the earth are being mercilessly wasted away instead of being put to some constructive use—in that case, God will first administer to them some mild shocks and follow them up with severe jolts in order that these people may take heed and mend their ways.

When these people do not give up their refractory behavior even after these warnings, they are dispossessed of their right to govern that land and another people, who are comparatively superior in virtue, are installed in power over them. The process, however, does not stop at this point. If,

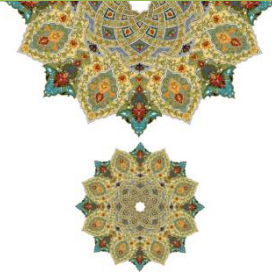


even after coming under the subjugation of a foreign people, the natives of a country, still do not display any capability and skill and their performance shows destructive rather than constructive tendencies, God then eliminates this nation and raises another people to take their place. In this case, the Divine viewpoint is always that which a master ought to adopt under these circumstances. For the administration of His land, He takes no account of the hereditary and birthrights of the various candidates and claimants. What He looks for in the candidates is who among them possesses the greatest ability for doing good and the lesser inclination towards causing devastation.

At a given period of time, the candidates who are best qualified according to this standard are chosen and until such time as their constructive achievements outweigh their destructive deeds or until a better candidate who has a comparatively lesser capacity for confounding matters is not forthcoming, the management of the land remains in the hands of the incumbents.

## **A TESTIMONIAL FROM HISTORY**

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### **THE EVIDENCE OF HISTORY**

History bears witness to the fact that God has always managed the affairs of His earth on the principle which I have described above. Why go far? Let us survey the history of our own country.

When the creative capabilities of the original inhabitants of this country were spent, God appointed the Aryans<sup>1</sup>, who had

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<sup>1</sup> The Aryans (also referred to as ‘Indo-Europeans’) were a hunting and herding people from Central Asia who are theorized to have migrated and settled in the Indian subcontinent approximately 500 years after the fall of the Indus River civilization (i.e. approximately 1800 BCE). That time (around 1500 BCE) is considered to be the start of Vedic period – a period named after the religious scripture of Hinduism, Vedas.

the best creative talents among the contemporary peoples, to administer this country.

After conquering this subcontinent, they founded a glorious civilization. They devised various sciences and arts, explored resources of the soil, dug out the treasures of the earth and used them for constructive purposes. They created more than they demolished. As long as they were equipped with these creative potentialities, they remained at the helm of affairs of the land despite vicissitudes or fluctuations of power during that time in history. Invaders marched upon them with full might but were repulsed because they were not better qualified to rule than the Aryans. The onslaughts of the invaders were in the nature of warnings administered at times when the Aryans showed signs of deterioration. But at last when they set upon the evil course and began to degenerate; when they started destroying more and creating little; when they were sunk in the depth of moral degradation the traces of which can still be witnessed in the 'Bam-Margi Movement'; when they artificially split up mankind and created divisions in their society on the grounds of caste and color<sup>2</sup>, and

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<sup>2</sup> The Vedic period is spread between 1500-500 BCE; it was this time during which the religions such as Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism were developed. During this time, the Aryans combined their religious and political ideas with those of Dravidian civilizations. Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa (ancient towns located in Pakistan) are considered Dravidian civilizations. During this time, the caste system and Hinduism also began to take shape. This caste system comprised of the following five classifications:

- Brahmins: priests, scholars and teachers.
- Kshatriyas: rulers, warriors and administrators.

arranged their society in the vertical form like a ladder in which he who sat on the upper rung of the ladder became a master and the man sitting on the rung just below him became his subservient; when they subjected millions of human beings to hideous persecution which is still extant in the shape of the cult of untouchability, when they closed the doors of knowledge upon common masses, when their pundits sat over the treasures of knowledge coiled like snakes; when their governing classes had no other care except to extort their harshly imposed dues and live merrily on the earnings of their subjects - it was at this juncture that Almighty God divested them of power over this land and Central Asian peoples were provided an opportunity to work here who had, at that moment in history, imbibed the superior values of life under the impress of the Movement of Islam.

## **MUSLIM RULE IN INDIA**

These People remained at the helm of affairs in this country for several centuries and many native-born people who had embraced Islam also became partners in the rule. There is no blinking the fact that these people were guilty of much destruction, but their creative achievements always surpassed

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- Vaishyas: agriculturalists and traders.
  - Shudras: laborers and service providers.
  - Avarna (also known as Dalits or untouchables): Communities which did not belong to one of the four varnas or classes; these people were usually isolated and their jobs were cleaning the human feces, the dead bodies and so on. Their status as untouchables remained in place in India till 1949.
-

their chaotic deeds. A lot of development work that happened in this area, happened because of them. They spread the light of knowledge, brought about reforms in ideas, culture, and civilization. They turned the country's means and resources to the best advantage according to the standards of the age and established an efficient judicial system which, although, far below the real standards set by Islam, was yet far superior to the past system and to the systems then prevailing in the neighboring countries.

However, in the end, even the Muslim rulers began to degenerate like their predecessors. Their constructive talents deteriorated and they began to exhibit destructive tendencies. They too undermined the solidarity of their society by creating social gradations, practicing racial discrimination and fanning class distinction which resulted in several moral, political and cultural evils. The Muslim rulers too turned from justice to oppression and inclined heavily towards the latter. They forgot the responsibilities of the State and took interest only in the gains, mostly unjust gains that the State could confer on them. They abandoned the works of development and acts of reform and began to dissipate the powers and means that God had bestowed on them. They expended their energies mostly in those activities which led to the decadence of life. They had grown so indolent and steeped in love of ease and pleasure that after the final debacle when the royal family was ignominiously expelled from Delhi's Red Fort, the princes - those who laid claims to rulership only yesterday - were too weak to run for their lives, because they had long ago given up walking on the earth. The moral degradation of

the Muslim masses had aggravated to such an extent that from the common man to the highest dignitary they had lost all sense of adherence to anything higher than loyalty to self-interest.

In this state of moral bankruptcy, nothing could prevent them from bartering away their religion, nation, and country for mean personal ends. Muslims became mercenary soldiers in millions whose moral standard was just like pet-dogs. They were ever ready to transfer their allegiance to any master who promised them a loaf of bread and were prepared to hunt down their compatriots at the bidding of their masters. Little did they realize the meanness of the situation that by acting as base mercenaries they were helping the foreign enemy to reduce their country to subjection. Even a man of the caliber of Ghalib (A renowned Indian Muslim poet during the empire of the Mughals) boasts: “Military service has been the hereditary profession of my forefathers for hundreds of generations”. It never occurred to the great poet even for a single moment that the profession of a mercenary is a disgraceful one and is not something to be proud of.

## **DISMISSAL OF THE MUSLIMS FROM RULE**

When the Muslims reached such a state of moral turpitude, God resolved to oust them from power. The administration of India fell vacant for new candidates. At this time four contenders for power were in the field:

- The Marhattas,
- The Sikhs,

- The British and
- Some Muslim nobles.

If you take an objective view and look at the historical events of that period and subsequent developments without national bias, you will be convinced that none of the contenders for power commanded those constructive capabilities which the British so eminently possessed. The British had weaknesses but the Marhatta, the Sikh and Muslim adversaries were worse in this respect. None of them could have been able to introduce the reforms that the British did. There was much that British destroyed, but the others would certainly have destroyed far more. Viewing generally, the British would appear to possess several shortcomings in various respects. But when viewed in comparison with their contemporary rivals, their virtues would outnumber their faults. It is for this reason that God once again set aside the unjustified manmade principle: "Only the native of a country are destined to rule over it whether they work for its betterment or cause deterioration". God once again reinforced the historical principle: "No, the land belongs exclusively to God. It is He alone who has the right to appoint or dismiss a ruler. God does not take account of any racial, national or hereditary claims of a people to rule. He decides in favor of those who would, on the whole, establish an equitable and just rule". The Holy Qur'an says:

*Say, "O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will. You honor whom You will and You humble whom You*

*will. In Your hand is [all] good. Indeed, You are over all things competent.” (3:26).*

In accordance with this Divine Law, God brought a nation from thousands of miles away whose number in this country never surpassed the figure of three or four hundred thousand<sup>3</sup>. They utilized the men and resources of this country to subjugate the Hindus, Muslims, and the Sikhs and took the reins of government into their own hands. Hundreds of millions of natives lived as serfs of an insignificant number of Englishmen. A single Englishman usually ruled over a vast district single-handedly without the aid of any of his compatriots sharing his burden. During this period, the Indian people served as functionaries under the orders of foreign masters; they did what they were told as subordinates rather than out of their own will. We should admit and if we refuse to admit, we would stand guilty of denying the reality, that during the entire course of the British rule everything creative that happened in the life of India was

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<sup>3</sup> In 1854, the East India Company's armies numbered 280,000, the vast majority of them being Indian. Shortly after gaining the rule, they conducted a census. The 1861 Census revealed that the English population in India was 125,945. Of these, about 41,862 were civilians as compared with about 84,083 European officers and men of the Army. In 1880, the standing Indian Army consisted of 66,000 British soldiers, 130,000 Natives, and 350,000 soldiers in the princely armies (i.e. armies of local states which had become British vassals or allies). It is accordingly not false to claim that the locals who sold themselves for pieces of loaf had a major role to play in establishing the British rule in India. The policy of 'divide and rule' worked for the British. This also shows the incapability of local rulers and leaders at that time who bowed in front of such small numbers of invaders.



accomplished by the British or was brought about under the impetus of the British.

When we compare the present condition of India with those times when the British took over the government, we cannot deny that the role of their constructive achievements is longer than their misdeeds. The natives had no capacity to achieve what the British accomplished. Hence we see that the decision that God has made in regard to the fate of India in mid-eighteenth century was correct.

## **EXPULSION OF THE BRITISH**

The British have now reached the limit of their creative achievements. They can no more do anything constructive. What good the British are capable of doing, the others can now do equally well. On the other hand, the balance of their misdeeds has become alarmingly heavy and as long as they remain at the helm of affairs, they will continue to misrule and cause havoc rather than do some good to India.

The charge sheet against them is so long that it is difficult to go over it in one sitting, nor, indeed, it is needed to give a description of it as it is known to all and sundry. The Divine Will now is that the British should be expelled from power in India. They have shown good sense in their resolve to leave India of their own accord. If they had not done so, they would be expelled in disgrace by violent means, for the inexorable law of God does not permit the continuance of British rule any longer.

## **FREEDOM-A TEST FOR THE PEOPLE OF INDIA**

This moment through which we are passing is one of those turning points in history when the Real Sovereign of the earth brings the rule of one authority to an end and decides to transfer the administration of a country to a new authority. The transfer of power which is being arranged in this country should not mislead you into thinking that it is a final dispensation whereby the administration of the country is being handed over to the native inhabitants. You perhaps consider it a plain matter that the foreigners who had ruled the country for long are now quitting and the administration would automatically be restituted to the natives. The matter is not as simple as that. God's decisions are not made in this manner. God did not in the first place install these foreigners in power without purpose, nor is He now hosting them without reason. God did not dispossess the natives of their rule without cause, nor will He reinstate them in power without design.

The people of India stand as candidates for power today. The Hindus, the Muslims the Sikhs—all demand power. Since these three groups are the older inhabitants of the land, so they are being given the first chance to rule over the country. But this is not a permanent dispensation; their appointment to rule is probationary. If they demonstrate their capacity for doing more good than evil, their rule will be made permanent. Otherwise, if the people of India demolish more than they can build, they will soon witness their eviction from power and God will choose some other nation from far or near to

take charge of the administration of this country. In such cases, there is no appeal against Divine dispensation. Having demonstrated their unworthiness to the whole world, would they have the cogent right as to make any appeal for the revocation of the Divine order? And if they cast all shame to the winds and persist in their wailing who will sympathize with their plight?

## **OUR MORAL CONDITION**

Let us survey now the capacities, abilities, virtues, and achievements of the people of India - the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs - which they can present before God in support of their petition that He should restore power to them. I trust that you will bear with me if at this stage I read before you openly and unsparingly every item of the charge sheet which has been indiscriminately served on the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs by the 'Court of Morality'. I am not very happy in describing the vices of my nation or my compatriots; in fact, my heart bleeds with sorrow at the contemplation of their perverse morals. But whether it pleases them or not, I consider it imperative to speak the truth on their face. I foresee the terrible consequence of their vices which they will not only witness but will have to endure in future. I fear that these vices will throw them into the abyss of disgrace. We, you, none of us will be spared from the horrible results of our immoral acts. I mention these evils with a deep sense of sorrow so that those who have ears may listen and devise measures of reform.

You can judge the moral standards of the individual members of a society in the light of your own experience and observations. What percentage of men from among us hesitates to usurp the rights of others, abstains from gaining profit by unlawful means, or refrains from telling a 'useful' lie or committing some 'profitable act' of dishonesty on the ground that such deeds are morally wrong? What percentage of men is prompted by moral considerations in refraining from committing crimes or perpetrating an evil on such occasions where the long arm of the law cannot apprehend them or where they hope to escape from the clutches of the law? How many persons work for the welfare of others, serve others with sympathy and selflessness or treat others fairly and politely without having a personal axe to grind? What is the ratio of those traders among the business community who do not indulge in deceit, fraud, false representation or unlawful profiteering? How many of our industrialists pay due regard to the consumer and national interest simultaneous with the motive to earn maximum profits? How many of our landowners have the humanity to realize that by hoarding grain and making huge profits by selling it at highest rates, they are causing hundreds and thousands of people to suffer the distress of hunger? How many of our capitalists have amassed their mountains of gold without violating the rights of others or without adopting unfair means? How many of our working people earn their wages and salaries by doing an honest day's work? How many of our civil servants are not guilty of graft, embezzlement, tyranny, callousness, indifferent to duty, illegal gains and misuse of authority? How many of our lawyers, doctors, hakims, journalists, publishers,

authors and self-styled ‘Servants of the Nation’ feel some sense of shame when they use unsavory means to promote their self-interest and inflict mental, moral, financial and physical harm on the people of God. It would not be an exaggeration to say that hardly five percent people are those that have escaped this severe disease. The epidemic has spared none among the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians or the Harijans; all are equally in the grip of this disease without any discrimination. The moral standards of all these communities are alarmingly low and none of them can claim superiority over others in this respect.

## **THE CONSEQUENCES OF MORAL DECAY**

When the moral decay had degenerated a very large number of individuals, it was natural that this disease which had corroded our morals, should assume an epidemic form and manifest itself in the collective behavior of our people. The first sign of this impending storm was the overcrowding of passengers on the railway trains due to war emergency. The selfishness, callousness, and cruelty which people belonging to the same nationality and the same country exhibited towards one another was a clear symptom of our rapidly deteriorating morality. To the hardships of shortages and inflation were added hoarding and black marketing on a vast scale. During the artificially created dreadful Bengal famine<sup>4</sup>, a

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<sup>4</sup> The famine being referred here is The Bengal famine of 1943. It was a major famine of the Bengal province in British India during World War II. An estimated 2.1–3 million out of a population of 60.3 million (5% of the population) died of starvation, or of malaria and other

class of our people ruthlessly subjected millions of their compatriots to starvation to death for the sake of their own capital gains. All these were primary symptoms of the malaise. The lava of wickedness, baseness, beastliness, and cruelty which had been boiling for a long time suddenly burst out and its fires are now raging over the length and breadth of India in the form of communal riots. The new chapter of communal strife among the Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs

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diseases aggravated by malnutrition, population displacement, unsanitary conditions and lack of health care. Millions were impoverished as the crisis overwhelmed large segments of the economy and social fabric.

During this time, almost half of the population broke out of the family structure and husbands left their wives and the elderly. A mass migration happened to areas where there was food available. There dead bodies spread everywhere. As the people were unable to afford the burials, they put the dead-bodies in water channels which contaminated them and caused many other diseases. All these things compounded the already worse situation. While all of this was happening, the British government did not feel any need to do anything significant for these people. Historians have frequently characterised the famine as "man-made", asserting that wartime colonial policies created and then exacerbated the crisis. The provincial government's policy failures began with denial that a famine existed. Humanitarian aid was ineffective through the worst months of the food crisis, and the government never formally declared a state of famine. It first attempted to influence the price of rice paddy (unmilled rice) through price controls. These measures created a black market and encouraged sellers to withhold stocks. Hyperinflation resulted from speculation and hoarding after controls were abandoned.

started by the Calcutta riots <sup>5</sup> have given these three communities an opportunity to exercise their vilest instincts.

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<sup>5</sup> The Calcutta Riots of 1946 were four days of massive Hindu-Muslim riots (16-19 August 1946) in Calcutta, the then capital of Bengal province of India which resulted in almost 5,000 to 20,000 dead (according to various estimates) and 15,000 wounded. A large number of rape cases occurred too. Most of the victims of these riots were Muslims.

Background: Muslim League had called for 16<sup>th</sup> of August 1946 as a *hartal* (general strike) to assert its demand for a separate state for the Muslims. The Star of India, an influential local Muslim newspaper, published detailed programme for the day. The programme called for complete hartal and general strike in all spheres of civic, commercial and industrial life except essential services. The purpose of observing this day was to have public meetings and organize processions to create awareness about Muslim League's point of view and demands without any disturbance to general life as explained by H. V. Hodson in his book 'The Great Divide'. Hussain Shaheed Suharwardi, the then Chief Minister of Bengal who belonged to Muslim League, requested the British governor of the province, Sir Frederick Burrows, to declare a public holiday on 16<sup>th</sup>, to which he agreed. However, this displeased the congress and the Hindu population who thought that if this day is declared as a public holiday, they will need to keep their businesses and shops closed too which would help Muslim League's cause. Hindu public opinion was mobilised around the Akhand Hindustan (United India) slogan. Certain Congress leaders in Bengal imbibed a strong sense of Hindu identity, especially in view of the perceived threat from the possibility of marginalizing themselves into minority against the onslaught of the Pakistan movement. The Hindus started to barricade the roads such as Tala Bridge and Belgachia Bridge and other places to prevent Muslims processions coming into the town for their mass gathering. This turned into a brick fight with stones being thrown at each other. The events unfolded in a way that this strike converted into massive riots between Hindus and Muslims in Calcutta. By 1200 hours on 16<sup>th</sup>, there were fights happening in almost all streets in the city. According to British reports, the Hindus and Muslims were busy

The most unimaginable deeds of inhumanity are being openly and unashamedly displayed by citizens in and around their localities. In large places, almost all inhabitants have turned into lawless ‘goondas’ and are indulging in such severe crimes that were hitherto beyond the imagination of the fiercest

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fighting with each other and none of them did any thing against the British. According to the British Military’s report released on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1946 (ref: WO 216/662), “there were corpses all over North Calcutta, they were in the river, canals, side lanes, in fact, everywhere. The number of shops looted and burnt must be somewhere in the region of 2 to 3 thousand.” These riots left more than 100,000 people homeless within 72 hours. The riots also spread to other areas outside Calcutta. These events sowed the seeds for the eventual partition of India. Many of us forget the struggles that our forefathers had to undertake in order acquire a homeland where we could freely practice our faith and not be considered second-class citizens.



**Picture:** Vultures and corpses in the street of Calcutta after the Calcutta Riots, August 1946 (Public Domain Image)



goondas. Infants have been butchered while they were sucking the breasts of their mothers. Men have been stripped naked and raped in the presence of crowds comprising of thousands of people. Daughters, wives, and sisters have been assaulted before the eyes of the helpless fathers, husbands, and brothers. House of worship and religious books have been desecrated in the most degrading fashion. The sick, the wounded and the old folks have been subjected to inhuman violence. The passengers have been hurled down from running trains. They have hacked the limbs of living persons and hunted down the un-armed and helpless human beings like animals. Neighbors have sacked the homes of neighbors. Friends have betrayed friends. The persons responsible for providing shelter have themselves abrogated their pledge for the protection of the people. The forces responsible for maintaining law and order (Police, Army, and the judicial Magistrates) have openly joined the communal riots. They have not only personally committed acts of violence, but have abetted, supported and guided the violent operations of their chosen factions. In brief, no form of cruelty and high handedness, callousness and base villainy has been spared during the last few months to which we as a whole have not fallen, victims. And the full venom has not been exhausted yet. There are signs that all this is shortly going to recur on a larger and a more dreadful scale.

Do you imagine that all the happenings are the outcome of some casual disturbance? If this is what you think, you are suffering from an illusion. I have just pointed out to you that ninety-five percent of the inhabitants of this country are

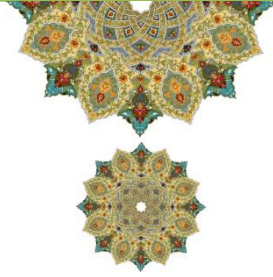
victims of moral disease. How can the collective behavior of a nation remain sane and healthy when such a large number of her individual members morally degenerate? It is for this reason that the three communities - the Hindus, Muslims, and the Sikhs - no longer attach any value and importance to virtues like truth, justice, and righteousness. A truthful, honest and upright person is reduced to an object of scorn. To dissuade someone from evil ways and exhort righteousness—these are today the most intolerable crimes in the governing code of their society. They have turned their faces from equity and fair play; they scorn all talk of justice and right conduct.

Each community idolizes only those people who advocate her unjustified demands and claims, fans the flames of prejudice against others and is ready to fight for the fulfillment of their fair or foul ends. It is on these grounds that these nations have carefully selected the worst individuals from among them to act as their representatives. They hand-picked the most notorious criminals of their community and installed them as their leaders in action. Individuals who possessed the basest morals had no sense of honor and knew no principles rose as leaders of these communities and won the greatest popularity in the field of journalism. They drove their degenerate communities on the road to corruption harder and faster. Instead of converging the contradictory national demands on an equitable point, they escalated them to the point of conflict. To the conflict of economic and political interests, they added the fire of fury, hatred, and vendetta and continued to whip up these evil passions. For

years, they incited their people with incendiary speeches and writings to fight like dogs and wolves. They filled the hearts of all and sundry with the fire of evil passions and blind vendetta. The storm that is raging before you today is not temporary or seasonal. It is a natural result of the several disruptive causes which have been at work within our society for a long period of time. This resultant catastrophe is not temporary or short-lived, but the situation will continue to aggravate day by day as long as the disruptive influences are at a work in our society. This is a poisonous crop which has now ripened after years of sowing and watering and no one can say for how long you and your coming generations will continue to reap it.

## THE CURE

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### TIME TO MAKE A STRONG RESOLVE

Gentlemen, it is high time that you consider dispassionately that at this juncture in our country's history when plans for a change-over of administration is highly expected, what proof of our own worth and ability are we presenting before the Sovereign Lord of this earth? The time calls upon us to demonstrate by our actions that if it is the Will of the Lord to bestow the administration of this land upon us, we shall make it an abode of happiness. We shall establish justice and equity in this land. We shall promote sympathy, a spirit of cooperation and a feeling of kindness for each other in this country.

We shall harness the resources of this country for our own welfare and the betterment of humanity at large. We shall uphold righteousness and suppress all evils. On the contrary, however, we are representing ourselves as the greatest

devastators, the matchless mischievous and cruel fiends that if He hands over the authority in this land to us, we shall lay waste whole villages and towns, burn to ashes entire localities and hamlets; we would put lesser premium on human life than even over the lives of flies and mosquitoes; we would degrade women and violate their modesty; we would slaughter children; we would give no quarter to the old, sick and the wounded; we would desecrate the houses of worship and religious books without ignoble passions; and the earth which you populated with living beings will be littered with human dead bodies and the shells of gutted buildings.

Does your conscience really admit the possibility that having presented this black picture of your deeds, vices, and crimes, God will yet consider you worthy of trust and prefer to transfer the administration into your hands? Having witnessed these crimes will He yet say “Well done! Ye who are the progeny of My former gardeners! You have the preeminent right to look after my garden. Indeed I had laid out this garden for the only purpose that it be uprooted, ruined, desolated and be filled with all the stinking rubbish. Take it under your charge and destroy it as much as you like”.

## **THINK OF REFORMING YOURSELF**

I am not saying all this to you so that you may lose all hope for the future. I myself am not disappointed nor do I want others to feel that way. The idea that I wish to convey to you is that the people of India by their own folly and ignorance are bent upon losing a golden opportunity which only once in

centuries God Almighty grants to people at the time of historic change-over in a country's administration. It was high time that they demonstrated their best qualities and the most excellent abilities in order to qualify themselves in the eyes of God for the guardianship of His land. Today, however, the people of India are zealously competing with each other in acts of oppression, ferocity, and cruelty, so as to win the greatest disapprobation of God. Such manners do not qualify a nation for achieving freedom, progress, and glory.

On the other hand, these acts entail the danger that Divine Judgement may again condemn us to slavery and degradation. Hence all sensible people who possess an awareness of the situation should endeavor to rectify matters.

## **HOW CAN YOU RECTIFY MATTERS?**

At this stage, a question will arise in your minds as to how can we rectify our matters? I am prepared to answer this question.

## **LAUNCH A REFORM MOVEMENT**

In this darkness, there is only one glimmer of hope for us. Degradation has not yet enveloped our entire population. There is at least five percent of people who are immune from the evil infection that is raging today. We can capitalize on these people to launch a movement for reform.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS ELEMENTS**

The first step in the movement for reformation is to identify, select and organize the righteous elements in our society. As

ill-luck would have it, the evil forces in our society are well-organized and operated under systematic planning, but the forces of good are in a disorganized state. Good people are certainly there, but they are in disarray. There is no mutual cooperation and coordination among them. They have no programme and do not act in concert. Due to these reasons, they have been reduced to an ineffective crowd. Every now and then, a God-fearing man raises his voice against the prevailing evils, but when no support is forthcoming from any quarter his single voice too is stilled in disappointment. Sometimes a man openly proclaims what is right and just, but the organized forces of evil throttle his voice and the righteous do no more than praise his boldness in private. Sometimes a man cannot hold himself when he witnesses the acts of inhumanity and makes a protest, but the ferocious elements rush upon him and suppress him and the fate of this man serves as a deterrent to those who still feel the pricks of conscience within their soul.

This state of affairs must end. If we do not want that our country should suffer the wrath of God and a number of the righteous and the evil ones among us should fall victim to the torments that the wrath of God will bring upon us, we should earnestly endeavour to collect and organize the righteous elements who have escaped the prevailing epidemic of moral turpitude. This organized force should check the rising tide of this mischief which is driving us towards a catastrophic end.

There is no cause for concern even though this righteous element is hopelessly outnumbered. If this creative minority

unites itself and the members of this little group base their individual and collective conduct on the principles of truth, fair play, righteousness, sincerity, honesty, and firmness of purpose, and if they adopt a well-considered programme for the most satisfactory solution of life's problems and for administering the affairs of the world in an equitable manner, there is not a shadow of doubt that the organized forces of evil, despite their numerical strength and fatal weapons, will be annihilated by this small but organized body of the God-fearing people.

Human nature detests wickedness. However, human nature is liable to be misled and deformed; yet the inborn virtue of goodness instilled into it by the Lord can never be eliminated. The number of those who are preoccupied with evil, and become its standard-bearers is really small. Similarly, there are very few people who are fully devoted to virtue and are actively engaged in establishing the noble causes. In between these two groups, most of the common people fluctuate between virtue and wickedness. They are not particularly inclined towards evil, nor are they excessively drawn towards virtue. It is the standard-bearers of good or evil who influence and guide the sentiments of the majority of common people and their inclinations wholly depend on whether the viewpoint of the righteous is transmitted to them first or whether the forces of evil steal a march over the forces of good and succeed in drawing them to their side. If the standard-bearers of good do not enter the field at all and make no efforts to guide the people on the path of virtue, the void thus created will be filled by spearheads of the evil



forces and they will draw the people to the path of evil. But if the standard-bearers of righteousness enter the field of action and perform the task of reforming the society in right earnest, the leaders of evil forces cannot maintain their hold on the masses for much longer. These two forces will confront each other in the sphere of morality, and in this combat, evil can never dominate virtue. Falsehood may expend its full force against the truth, dishonesty may use all its stratagems against honesty; corruption may contend with piety with all the power it can muster, yet the final round will always be won by truth, piety, and honesty.

The world is not so insensible that having tasted the sweetness of righteousness and endured the bitterness of evil, it should yet adjudge bitter evil better than sweet piety.

### **DEVELOP A CLEAR CONCEPT OF GOOD AND EVIL**

In order to accomplish the task of reforming society, a clear concept of good and evil is next in importance to the organization of the righteous people. We should have a clear conception of what is evil and what is good, so that we may endeavor to eliminate evil and enforce piety with all the power at our command. I do not propose to discuss the matter in detail on this occasion. However, I would like to present before you a brief sketch of these two factors.

### **ELEMENTS CAUSING DETERIORATION**

The elements which introduce deterioration in human life can be grouped into four categories:

## **1. Lack of God-Consciousness**

When the fear of God is banished from human affairs, it results in the prevalence of injustice, tyranny, corruption and all forms of moral degradation in the world.

## **2. Indifference to the Divine Guidance**

An indifferent attitude towards the Guidance vouchsafed by God has done away with all permanent canons of moral conduct which may be observed in human affairs. For this reason, the entire behavior at the individual, group or national level is controlled by self-interest, self-gratification, and love of pleasure. As a result, people have become unscrupulous and are bent upon achieving their selfish goals by fair means or foul. They do not hesitate to achieve their ends by the vilest and all the possible nefarious means.

## **3. Selfishness**

Selfishness not only impels people to violate the right of others but also manifests itself in the form of racism, nationalism and class distinctions on a large scale which result in conflicts of various types.

## **4. Inactiveness or Licentiousness**

Because of inactiveness or licentiousness, man either does not make use of God-given capabilities or puts them to a wrong use; either he does not harness God-given resources or employs them for unlawful purposes. In the first case, the Divine Law does not permit inactive and incompetent people

to hold the reigns of authority in His land for long. God replaces such inadequate people with those who possess constructive talents. In the second case, when the destructive deeds of a wicked people outnumber their constructive actions, God throws them out of power; and often these people are annihilated by the explosions caused by their own destructive deeds.

## **ELEMENTS OF REFORM**

In contrast to the above, the elements which create beauty and order in human society can also be divided under four heads:

### **1. Fear of God**

Fear of God is the only reliable guarantee of preventing one from committing evil deeds and setting him on the path of righteousness. Fear of God is the only seed which blossoms into truth, justice, trustworthiness, righteousness, restraint and all other virtues which serve as the bedrock of a peaceful and progressive human culture and civilization. Although these virtues can be acquired through other belief systems and philosophies, those other sources stop at a certain limit and do not go beyond that. Even in that state their foundations keep shaking (and the building of a person's character can fall anytime). The fear of God is the only sure means of deterring a man from evil ways and directing his steps firmly on the path of virtue; and that does not just happen on a limited scale. Its fruits can be witnessed in all spheres of human life on a vast scale.

## **2. Obedience to the Divine Guidance rather than one's own desires**

Obedience to the Commands of God is the only means of bringing individual, social, national, and international behavior under the control of a permanent system of moral principles. As long as man is free to choose morals that suit his purposes, he cannot practice what he preaches. In books, he writes one set of glorious rules in letters of gold but is guided in practice by a separate set of rules which promote his self-interest. He bases his own claims upon some fixed moral rules, but in considering the claims of others he alters the same rules from moment to moment as opportunity, expediency, passion or need demands. It is 'self-interest', not 'right' around which the moral life of man revolves. He does not believe that he should adapt his practices to the rules of justice and fair play; instead, it is his desire that all moral rules should bend to serve his own interest. This then is the root cause of the wrong behavior of nations and the breaking out of deterioration in the world.

In contrast to this man can only achieve the ideals of peace, prosperity, well-being, and glory by adopting a moral code the pivotal point of which is not self-interest but fairness and justice. This moral code should be the supreme arbitrator in all human affairs, individual or national, commercial or political or in matters of war and peace. It is evident that the source of such a moral code is the Commandments of God and man can abide by them only if he surrenders his own

right to alter or introduce amendments to the Divine Law and succumbs to the Will of God in all matters.

### **3. The Organization of Human Society**

There should be a system built upon the principles of equal status and equal rights of all human beings instead of on the principle of safeguarding the vested interests of individuals, nations, races or classes. No unreasonable distinctions, no stratification of high or low, no caste-ism and no artificial prejudices should be allowed to exist in human society. No one should enjoy preferential rights and no artificial handicaps or barriers should mar the opportunity to develop his full potential. This society should be so broad-based so as to encompass the entire human race on a footing of equality.

### **4. Righteous Actions**

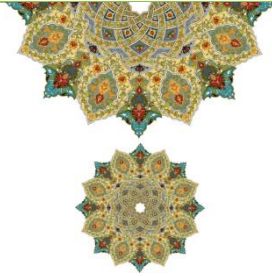
Righteous action means to make full and proper use of the God-given potentialities and resources.

Gentlemen! These four elements constitute what is called “the making” and “reformation”. It would be a boon to us if we form among us an organization of righteous persons who would constantly endeavor to eradicate the causes of destruction and devise means of construction. If their endeavors succeed in drawing the people of this country to the path of righteousness, God Almighty is not so unjust as to dispossess this nation of the right to rule her own country and thrust foreign rulers on her. But, God forbid, if the struggle of the righteous people comes to naught, we cannot

predict what fate is in store for us, for you, or for the citizens of this land.

## **A FOUR-POINT AGENDA FOR MUSLIM MINORITIES**

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This four-point agenda is taken from a speech delivered by Maulana Maududi on 26-April-1947, three months prior to the partition of India. This speech aimed to lay down the way forward for the Muslims living in India as a minority for the first five years after the partition. The suggested approach comprised of four key points which have been summarized below. In order to make it applicable to Muslim-minorities living in other countries in present times, the points have been made generalized (by removing any specific references to India or Indian Muslims):

### **1. Think beyond race and nationality**

The first recommendation is to think above nationalism or race. It is not right for Muslims to demand things based on nationality or race, rather than working for Islam. Muslims need to completely change their approach. Questioning about

the representation given to them in parliament, making a hue and cry for their demands on the grounds of nationality and so on are not going to yield any benefit. In fact, it would further increase the animosity of those whose minds are biased. The only way to get rid of the Islamophobia is to build a public opinion that we are not here to take your government away from you at all or to deprive you of certain positions and powers that you currently enjoy. With this approach, we can overcome the negative sentiments that might be present in society.

The implication for Muslim-minorities:

It emphasized the point that we should not stand ourselves as opponents to the mainstream population of the countries we are living in. Rather, we should work with them and genuinely make them feel at ease. Without giving up our identity as Muslims, we should jell-in well and be positive contributors to the societies we live in. These gestures would help us avoid Islamophobia. Also, we should attach ourselves to our identity as Muslims which unites us all rather than the barricades of nationalities that separate and divide us.

## **2. Develop a true understanding of Islam**

The second most important requirement is that we should spread the knowledge of Islam among the Muslims as much as possible. We should encourage them to make Dawah and Tabligh (spreading the religion) their foremost priority. We should strive to improve their manners and way of living to such an extent that their non-Muslims neighbors and other



community members should consider their company, their gatherings and their way of living to be more superior to what is prevalent in the rest of the society. Based on this, if anyone wishes to join them and be a part of them, he should be included on equal grounds with respect. This requires years of struggle. But until and unless we make a large portion of Muslim society true representatives of Islam in terms of their knowledge, their action, their culture, and social aspects, this cannot be achieved. Irrespective of how beautifully you present the picture of Islam on paper, it will not appeal to the non-Muslims because what they practically see day and night presents a completely different picture of the Muslims. Even if someone becomes a Muslim after studying Islam for what it is and not looking at how Muslims represent it, it becomes difficult for him to jell in well with the community for many reasons, such as un-Islamic traditions prevalent among the Muslims, grievance of Muslims with others (individuals, organizations and nationalities alike), sectarian identities, unjust treatment, and so on. It is accordingly very important to fix the current state of Muslim society. In the absence of this, the work of dawah cannot be truly successful. If we succeed in doing this and nurture in them a spirit to share Islam wherever they work and live, our message will reach every nook and corner inshaAllah. There are many people in this society who struggle to find a purpose in their life or looking for a shelter that can give them strength and elevate their status. If we can do the Islah of our society and provide them with this opportunity, it would be a great service.

The implication for Muslim-minorities:

Workers of religious organizations in Muslim-minority countries should make a significant effort in spreading the true understanding of Islam. The members of Muslim community should be prepared as true representatives and callers to Islam through their words and their actions.

### **3. Use of our intellectual abilities for Islam**

The third point is that a substantial amount of the intellectual abilities of most of the people should be dedicated to the cause of Islam on regular basis. Most of the intellectuals and educated people living as Muslim-minorities have so far been unsuccessful in achieving many of the achievements that they were looking towards due to various reasons. They still have the talent. All they need is the right direction. If we can present a clear vision, direction and way forward to them, they can certainly understand this and join the cause. As we get more and more people like this, we should engage them in tasks that take us closer to achieving our vision. For example, we have a lot to do to change the negative perception of Muslims in media which have crafted by various forces over the years in order to achieve their political and other objectives. We need people who can generate newspapers. In those newspapers, they should intellectually tackle the faults of various prevalent systems which normal people sometimes remain oblivious to and can't find an alternative; they should explain how Islam and its civilization provides the solution that is best for the humanity. We also want our youngsters to engage in the production of such literature which can awaken the conscious of human beings and prepare them to be able

to separate the right from the wrong and to be willing to adopt a system that is just. And those people that Allah SWT has blessed with extraordinary abilities, we want them to take the leadership positions and lead the Muslims. We want our intellectual minds to hold the torch of the Quranic guidance in their hands and analyze every aspect of life under its light and then present a picture of the true Islamic way of life and system to the world.

#### **4. Learn the local languages**

The fourth important aspect is that all our members and those people who would engage with our organization should learn various languages that are spoken in the places they live in and should gain expertise in writing and speaking those languages. We should try to make the Islamic literature available in these languages as soon as possible. If we just affiliate ourselves with Urdu, then we will get separated out of a huge proportion of general population and would not be left with any means to connect with them. We definitely want Urdu language to be preserved as a lot of our valuable literature is in Urdu. However, we cannot tie the future of Islam to Urdu language. If Urdu cannot become the official language of the areas in which you live, and it is very obvious that it cannot, then you are required to do the propagation of Islam in the languages that are prevalent in the country where you live. This is not only required for non-Muslims but also for our own future generations. Our children would be so much exposed to the local languages that their relation with Urdu would be very limited. At that moment, if they don't

find Islamic literature in the languages they are exposed to, they will adopt the way of life that they would find prevalent in society.

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